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No. 19. Collected by Paul Thorasimsson, on the 15th of June, 1905, at Lake My Vatn, North Iceland (set c 1-2), measures, according to my measurements, 2.60x1.80.

Nos. 18 and 19 are both very dark eggs, while no. 17 is lighter. In the case of no. 19 most of the spots are very fine, even minute, with only a few larger ones. In no. 18 they are larger and blacker, those at the greater end being, in fact, great blotches and mostly confluent.

In the egg belonging to the same clutch with no. 18, there is a blotch near the butt which measures 20 millimeters by 10 millimeters, or nearly the size of one's thumb-nail. One still nearer the butt is nearly as large; but such markings in the eggs of loons are exceptional, and in any case appear to be formed by several smaller blotches, overlaid by somewhat thinner and very slightly lighter ones.

Loons' eggs are very different from any of those of the *Alcidae* or auks; indeed, in the case of some of the latter, the eggs are pure white, and present no markings of any kind whatever. Moreover, some of the puffins and other species lay but a single egg, although other auks lay two, and, as we know, so do the humming-birds.

These facts are alluded to simply to illustrate the point that the *number* of eggs laid by a bird of one well-defined group, selected as a single characteristic, is by no means a safe one to go by in taxonomy, in the matter of arraying that bird, or family of birds, with another group, simply for the reason that some of the latter assemblage may chance to do the same thing.

Still, in avian classification, the characters presented on the part of eggs always mean something, and such data is often of use in this connection; but it should never be employed as a single factor more than to be additional evidence, with respect to affinities, when associated with what is presented on the part of structure, habits and distribution.

As yet we have not the knowledge which will admit of correctly stating why it is that all loons lay two dark-colored, spotted eggs; but there is a reason for their so doing. And were we able to trace the matter back far enough into the past, that reason could be brought to light. For instance, could we but know what kind of an egg *Hesperornis* and its descendants laid, it would greatly help out.

Washington, D. C., October 13, 1913.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Plea for More Lasting Field Notes.—What happens finally to all the ornithological field notes that are made? A few of them are left to state and local institutions and societies, some to close personal friends of the deceased, and by far the greater majority I imagine, are put away with odds and ends in an old trunk until a house-cleaning by some member of the next generation puts them in the ash barrel. Again, how many of these notes are put and kept in concise, connected and decipherable form so that they may some day be of use to others?

From what I have myself seen I feel safe in venturing the statement that a good percentage of the average men who are interested in birds, other than those connected with some museum or other institution, will find that their old notes are scattered through notebooks of different sizes, and some of them, at least, stored with other old papers where they may be forgotten and at best hard to get at.

Notes that are worth taking at all are worth keeping in orderly condition and

passing along so that they may be of use to others. There are numberless ways of keeping field records systematically, and most of us have our own little pet notions about the one best way for this. What seems to be most desirable is to keep each species separate in card index form, making the different entries under their proper heads as soon as one returns from a trip. This in a way is a little cumbersome and has other drawbacks. Probably most of us in referring to our notes wish to refresh our memories in regard to the birds of some one section rather than general notes relating to a particular species. On the other hand, those who make nearly all their observations in one section would, I think, find the card index system of species most desirable.

I do not pose as an authority on the best method of note-keeping; I only know what system best suits my individual needs. While in the field and the majority of our birds are wrapped up, it is often hard to tell just what subspecies we take from day to day,—for instance, whether we have a Pileolated or a Golden Pileolated Warbler on a certain day, and there are often other things in our notes that need correcting. As soon as I return from a trip I sort out and identify the doubtful subspecies, make a note of the latter, and copy my notes. Those whose chirography is more legible than mine can trust to their pen, but I typewrite mine on a good quality of paper with the best and most lasting ink-ribbon obtainable, fasten the sheets together with paper clips, put the notes of each trip in a labelled manila folder and file the folders away in a fiber case. Some may object to this method, but the main and only thing is to have your notes in a lasting and legible form, and to follow some simple standardized system.

After the advisability of keeping notes for your own reference, is to see that after you are gone, they shall be put where they will be of the greatest help to others. Don't leave them knocking around to be thrown out with your old worthless papers, and don't leave them to your best friend. I would give a good deal if a certain ornithologist whose memory we all revere had put his notes where they could now be located,—notes that are a good deal more valuable than most of us have ever made; so, for the cause of science and the help of those younger ones who will be left when you are gone, instruct the members of your family to send your notes to some safe and sound institution where they will be in safe keeping and accessible to those who wish to use them. In order that these would not be too scattered, why not, all you western ornithologists, leave your notes to the Cooper Club? Mr. Grinnell, at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, or Mr. Chambers, at Eagle Rock, where most of the Club property is housed, are well situated to take care of these field notes, and could loan parts of them to members in good standing who might be engaged in special work. In time, this would grow to be quite a feature of the Club, and a very valuable one at that.—A. BRAZIER HOWELL, Covina, California.

Notes from Vicinity of Claremont, California.—In looking over the "From Field and Study" department in last CONDOR, I noticed Mr. Pierce's note on *Phainopepla nitens*. Although it is a well known fact that Phainopeplas winter here in small numbers, I thought it might be of interest to record that they were especially common the past winter. There was not a day passed that I did not see at least one of these birds and no day when it would not have been possible to find on search a half dozen or more. I have in mind particularly a female that resided all winter in the trees (pepper and sycamore) around the grammar school. It was while hunting on the mesa that I encountered them most often, in bushy country.

In connection with this I should like to mention the scarcity and peculiar actions of the Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). As I was particularly anxious to obtain specimens of these birds I watched for them most carefully all winter. Although a common winter visitant, there were none here during December or January, and it was not until the first part of February I received word of a flock west of town. I searched diligently all the pepper trees in the vicinity for three separate days, but was unrewarded. Nothing was seen of them again until the middle of March when a flock of about five stopped in town for a day or two and then passed on. During April they became common but were nearly all gone by May first. Both Mr. Pierce and I spent our spare time searching in pepper trees just outside of town with no result. Although we naturally associate Waxwings with pepper trees, yet I did not see a single Waxwing in

a pepper tree. All the flocks I saw were in sycamores, eucalyptus, camphor trees and evergreens, on the campus. The fact I wish to call attention to is that they were seen commonly *not* in pepper trees but feeding on the berries of the camphor (*Camphora officinalis*).

I had occasion this spring to witness an act of wanton destruction, committed apparently from jealousy. A Hummingbird (*Calypre anna*) had built a nest in a small tree just outside my window. Within fifty feet was the nest of a Cactus Wren (*Heleodrytes brunneicapillus couesi*). The Cactus Wrens paid little or no attention to the hummer's nest until the two eggs were laid and incubated for one week. During the week of incubation both Wrens were observed to be prowling around acting suspiciously, and finally the female (?) was actually seen to approach the nest when the hummingbird was absent, and to smash both eggs, tear the nest down on one side and then depart apparently satisfied.

On March third, while hunting on the mesa I discovered a Gambel Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*) which had been reduced to a terrible plight by a broken wing. The body was terribly bloated, the neck projected outward and was so swollen that the head was pointed downward and inward, and the bird barely able to run. In spite of this the eyes were bright and vivacious. I sent the bird intact to Mr. H. S. Swarth and he replied saying the body had been bloated and practically skinned alive by air entering through a broken humerus.—LEON LLOYD GARDNER, Dept. of Zoology, Pomona College, Claremont, California.

Cedar Waxwing Nesting in Humboldt County, California.—On August 3, 1913, my friend, W. W. Moore, came to my home, and told me that a pair of strange birds were getting nesting material in his yard. It was but a short while before I went over there and sure enough there was a pair of Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) one of which was tearing at an old piece of cotton rope, which was tied to a post. After it had enough, both birds flew over a narrow strip of tall alders and down into a gulch heavily covered with young alder, willow and a few myrtle bushes: not a very promising outlook on account of the distance the birds flew before they went over the alders.

The way we found the nest, my friend staid in his yard and I went down into the gulch and when the birds left he would whistle and I would be on watch for their coming so as to get some idea as to where to look for the nest. We had to do this several times before the nest was found, as the birds would go to a different clump of willows each time, and would very soon fly up and go to a patch of myrtles on the bank on the other side of the gulch. The nest when found was about ready for lining, and was left until the 11th of August, when nest and four eggs were taken, incubation indicating a full set.

This is the second set of Waxwing I have taken in this locality, the other having been several years back. I did not keep the date of taking that set.—JOHN M. DAVIS, Eureka, California.

Occurrence of the Yellow Rail in Southern California.—On January 31, 1914, while I was hunting near Corona, California, in a swampy meadow covered thickly with marsh grass and a few tules, both the grass and tules ranging in height from two to four feet, my dog flushed a strange small bird. It was shot and proved to be an adult female Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis*.

Several days later Mr. A. van Rossem and myself, after much tramping through this same small meadow, flushed another of these birds, which was collected. It was an adult male. Several times on this trip we heard what we were quite certain were the notes of these birds.

Again, about a month later, we visited this same place and while we did not flush or hear any more of these birds, we found some feathers in a small open pool and were very certain that they were from the breast of the Yellow Rail. Diligent searching through the swamps and grass-covered pastures near the above locality failed to disclose any more signs of these birds.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, Claremont, California.

Nesting of the Allen Hummingbird on Catalina Island.—While on Catalina Island, March 20 of this year, I examined eleven nests of the Allen Hummingbird (*Selasphorus allenii*), as follows:

Two nests with nearly full-grown young. These young were of such size that I feared too close examination of them would cause them to leave the nest. Three nests with eggs: a set of two, incubation advanced; a set of two, fresh; a set of one, advanced. Six unoccupied nests. Of these three were undoubtedly new nests of the year; two looked like old nests of the previous season; and the remaining one was not examined closely enough to determine its condition.

To give an idea of how commonly these birds were nesting I might state that only

about thirty trees were examined for possible nests and that only 55 minutes was spent in the examination of the above nests, a process which involved the carrying about and placing of a very large and cumbersome ladder.—G. K. SNYDER, *Los Angeles, California.*

White-throated Sparrow in Oregon.—On April 27, 1913, I shot a male White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) at Mulino, Clackamas County, Oregon. This is apparently the first record for western Oregon and the second for the state.—ALEX. WALKER, *Mulino, Oregon.*

The Lewis Woodpecker Nesting in Alameda County, California.—On June 12, 1914, I found a nest and pair of Lewis Woodpeckers (*Asyndesmus lewisi*) between Pleasanton and Niles, Alameda County. I was attracted to the nest by the female bird which began calling when I came in sight. She had in her bill what looked like a large black beetle. The male did not come around for about ten minutes, but when he did come, the two did not make much further noise. The nest was located in a solitary sycamore tree about forty feet above the ground in a dead limb. This tree was in the creek bottom within a thousand yards of the Grant Gravel Company's plant.—L. P. BOLANDER, *Oakland, California.*

The English Sparrow as Occurring in Northwestern Montana.—I should like to make one addition to my list of birds of northwestern Montana, published in the last *CONDOR*. Through my habit of omitting the English Sparrow from most of my bird notes, I find that I neglected to mention it in the manuscript. Not wishing to convey the impression that any county in Montana is free from this bird, I hereby supply the proper information, as follows.

Passer domesticus. English Sparrow. Abundant in all towns along the railroads in both Teton and Lewis and Clark counties. Small flocks also occurred in Choteau, Bynum and Augusta before these towns had railroad connections. Railroads have been built to all of these towns very recently (1913), and it is probable that the species will greatly increase in the near future.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS, *West Haven, Connecticut.*

Eye-color of Juncos: a Correction.—I find the birds I called *Junco phoenotus dorsalis*, on page 116 of the May *CONDOR*, are *Junco phoenotus caniceps*.

We only had the 1910 *Check-List*, and Bailey's *Hand-Book*, with us in the field, and could not decide which subspecies the brown-eyed bird was, eventually deciding on *dorsalis* largely on account of the range as given in the *Check-List*.

Ridgway's *Manual*, however, proves all my birds to be *caniceps*, which he rightly gives full specific rank.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, B. C.*

Early Arrival of the Ash-throated Flycatcher in the San Diegan District.—The observation of an Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) in Los Angeles, California, on March 15, 1914, affords what is probably the earliest date of arrival of the species in this region. The bird was seen in a pepper-tree bordering the sidewalk, in the southwestern part of the city, on Normandie, near Santa Barbara Avenue.—H. S. SWARTH, *Museum of History, Science and Art, Los Angeles, California.*

Unusual Abundance of the Glaucous-winged Gull on the Coast of Southern California.—During the winter of 1913-14 the Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) was unusually plentiful along the coast of Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties. Although, during ordinary winters, immature birds of the species are rather frequently seen along our coast, adults are usually so far from plentiful as to call for at least a second glance from the bird observer. During the past winter, however, both adults and immatures were abundant at least as far south as San Diego Bay, where I noted many individuals March 13, 1914. On several occasions during the winter months I found the species numerous in San Pedro Bay and along the government breakwater at that place.—G. WILLETT, *Los Angeles, California.*

The Eastern Sea Brant in California.—On January 30, 1914, there was added to the list of the game birds of the state a new species, for on that date there was secured near Bird Island on Arcata Bay, Humboldt County, a specimen of the Eastern Sea Brant, *Branta bernicla glaucogastera*. This goose, an adult male, was shot from a flock of Black Sea Brant (*Branta nigricans*) by West Dean of Eureka. A splendidly made study skin of this bird was prepared by Mr. Franklin J. Smith, of Eureka; and the owner, Mr. Otto Feudner of Oakland, California, generously donated it to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology where it bears the number 24588.—H. C. BRYANT, *University of California, Berkeley, California.*